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Government of Kerala
2026

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KERALA GAZETTE
അസാധാരണം
EXTRAORDINARY

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GOVERNMENT OF KERALA
Forest and Wildlife (B) Department

NOTIFICATION

G.O.(P)No.10/2026/F&WLD Dated, Thiruvananthapuram, 7th March, 2026

S. R. O. No. 326/2026

In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section(1)of section 30 and sections 47A to 47F read with section 76 of the Kerala Forest Act, 1961 (Act 4 of 1962), the Government of Kerala hereby make the following rules to amend the Kerala Forest (Restriction on cutting and selling of sandal trees and grant of licence for possession and transport of sandalwood and sandalwood oil) Rules,

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2012 issued by notification under G.O.(P) No.50/2012/F&WLD dated 16th April, 2012 and published as S.R.O.No. 278/2012 in the Kerala Gazette Extraordinary No.823 dated 20th April, 2012, namely:-

RULES

1. *Short title and commencement.* - (1) These rules may be called the Kerala Forest (Restriction on cutting and selling of sandal trees and grant of licence for possession and transport of sandalwood and sandalwood oil)Rules, 2026.

(2) They shall come into force at once.

2. *Amendment of the Rules.*- In the Kerala Forest (Restriction on cutting and selling of sandal trees and grant of licence for possession and transport of sandalwood and sandalwood oil) Rules, 2012,-

(1) in rule 2, after clause (a), the following clause shall be inserted namely:-

"(aa) "bonafide use" includes the use of sandal tree for rituals or medicinal purposes of the owner or his spouse, sons, daughters, widowed daughters, brothers below the age of 18 years, unmarried or widowed sisters, father, mother and children of a pre-deceased son or daughter;";

(2) in rule 3,-

(a) for sub-rule (3), the following sub- rule shall be substituted, namely :-

"(3)The Authorised Officer or an officer not below the rank of Range Forest Officer deputed by him, shall inspect the area and trees in the application, verify the boundaries and satisfy himself about the correctness of the boundaries of the land and ownership thereof and communicate his decision in writing within a period of fifteen days from the date of receipt of application under sub-rule (1) and in case where further information under sub-rule (2) is sought for, from the date of receipt of such information:

Provided that if the additional information sought from the Revenue officials is not received within the prescribed time limit of fifteen days, the Authorised Officer shall proceed further on the information furnished

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by the applicant or authorised agent and report non-compliance of the matter to the Revenue authorities.";

(b) sub-rules (4), (6), (7) and (8) shall be omitted;

(3) rule 4 shall be omitted;

(4) in rule 5, in sub-rule (1),-

(a) for clause (a), the following clause shall be substituted namely: -

"(a) Authorised Officer shall cause to cut, uproot and remove such sandal tree under the supervision of a Forest Officer not below the rank of a Section Forest Officer having jurisdiction over the area, as per procedure laid down in the Kerala Forest Code, within one month from the date of receipt of request in writing from the owner or his authorised agent.",

(b) for clause (e), the following clause shall be substituted, namely:-

"(e) The Depot Officer shall within seven days from the date of receipt of sandalwood in the depot, arrange to desap and clean the sandal wood and take into stock in a separate register to be maintained for sandalwood from private properties, after duly classifying the same as provided in the Kerala Forest Code.";

(c) for clause (f), the following clause shall be substituted namely: -

"(f) The Depot Officer concerned shall, within seven days after desapping and classification of the sandal wood received in the depot, intimate the Authorised Officer concerned the dimensions, quantity and quality, class of the sandalwood so received and average rate fetched in the previous auctions for such quality classes.";

(d) in clause (k), the following proviso shall be added, namely:-

Provided that the Forest Department shall open a separate head of account for depositing the sale value of the sandal trees from private properties and arrange to pay the sale value as per these rules to the owner of the sandalwood.";

(e) for clause (m), the following clause shall be substituted, namely:-

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"(m) The expenditure as per clause (g) and the payment as per clause (h) and (1) may be incurred by the Authorised Officer as Refund of Forest Revenue.";

(5) for rule 12, the following rule shall be substituted, namely:-

"12. *Appeal.*- (1) Any person aggrieved by the decision of the Authorised Officer may prefer an appeal before the Chief Conservator of Forest or Conservator of Forest in charge of a territorial Forest Circle within thirty days from the date of communication of such order and the appeal shall be considered and disposed of within a period of thirty days from the date of receipt of the appeal after affording the appellant a reasonable opportunity of being heard.

(2) A second appeal against the decision under sub-rule (1) may be filed before the Government and the decision of the Government thereon shall be final.";

(6) in Form I, under the heading "For office use", item (b) shall be omitted.

By order of the Governor,

MINHAJ ALAM,
Additional Chief Secretary to Government.

Explanatory Note

In consequent to the amendment to the Kerala Forest Act, 1961 (4 of 1962) as per the Kerala Forest (Amendment) Act, 2025 (1 of 2026), the Government have decided to amend the Kerala Forest (Restriction on cutting and selling of sandal trees and grant of licence for possession and transport of sandalwood and sandalwood oil) Rules, 2012.

The status of sandal tree as a royal tree and the perceived stringent provisions were sought to be relaxed by the amendments to section 47B and 47E of Kerala Forest Act, 1961. Government have also decided to relax the restrictions for cutting sandal trees from private lands, other than those reserved to Government during assignment of such land and those in the notified area under the Kerala Preservation of Trees Act, 1986, so as to promote planting of sandal trees. Provision has also been made for granting permission to the land owners to sell

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sandalwood through the forest department and to remove the sandal tree for any bonafide use.

The amendments also aims to speed up the disbursal of price of sandalwood to the owner and to delegate the power vested on the Authorised Officer to enable speedy removal of the same up on the request of the owner.

Amendments are also made to speed up the process of appeal and to rationalise the timeline given to the Depot Officer for the treatment of sandalwood received and reporting of its details to the Authorised Officer concerned.

The notification is intended to achieve the above objects.

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